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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

May 17, 1940

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "FASHIONS IN VEGETABLES." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Today, I'd like to have you go with me to watch the vegetable style parade. We'll see stringless beans--streamlined carrots--firm heads of lettuce--tender celery--and all sorts of other new vegetable fashions.

Although vegetables have been used as food for thousands of years--many of the important changes have been made quite recently.

It was about 25 years ago, that vegetables were first shipped in refrigerator cars. Before then, you had to depend on your own garden or nearby farms for your vegetables. There would be a few months in the summer when you had all the fresh vegetables you could possibly use. Then during all the rest of the year--there were only the vegetables you canned or stored away.

But now you can get all sorts of fresh vegetables anytime of the year--because they can be kept under refrigeration on long trips from other parts of the country. Besides that, many vegetables come to market in the quick-frozen form.

Long before the home grown season--and long after--you'll find fresh lettuce and tomatoes on display in city markets. And even when there's snow on the ground--there are gold-colored carrots--green peas--baby beets with the fresh leafy tops for greens--lima beans--and hosts of other vegetables.

In other words, the season for vegetables is much longer now that they are shipping under refrigeration. That means there are more fresh vegetables available--and, naturally, people are eating more vegetables.

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Then along about the same time--scientists were finding out about food values in vegetables. They found out and told the world that vegetables are so rich in food values -- they should be an important part of every well-balanced diet.

For one thing, the greens are highly important for their calcium and iron. In fact, the amount of these minerals in vegetables seems to be related to the depth of green color.

And vegetables are also rich in vitamins. For vitamin A...there are the green vegetables again--especially the green leaves--and also the yellow vegetables. You can get vitamin C from these same vegetables, and others--but tomatoes are the richest of any. And almost all vegetables supply some vitamin B₁--many of them vitamin G, as well.

While we were learning how important vegetables are in the diet--the growers were busy improving the quality. They were experimenting with new varieties to get crisp, tasty vegetables--of uniform size and color.

That's how the "snap bean" came to take the place of the old-fashioned "string bean." And the streamlined carrot was developed--the kind with the smooth sides, that are so much easier to scrape.

Cucumbers are longer and straighter now--so they can be cut into more slices. And tomatoes are no longer flabby and rough in shape...they're now firm and meaty--smooth and round--bright and shiny.

One of the most popular style trends in vegetables--is the new variety of lettuce. Instead of the Big Boston, with its floppy leaves, there's the Iceberg or New York lettuce. This new variety has a firm, compact head--almost like a cabbage. The leaves are crisp and tender--just about the right size for cups to hold salad. And this lettuce makes a perfect salad by itself--when served with your favorite dressing.

Another development in the last 25 years of vegetable history--is the system of standards and inspection set up by the Agricultural Marketing Service. Growers

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and wholesale buyers voluntarily make use of this service. So you benefit indirectly, when you buy vegetables--because there's an increased effort to grow and sell vegetables that are U.S. Grade No. 1.

And have you noticed that some vegetables on the market have a thin coat of wax on the outside? This wax coating is usually used on rutabagas. And experiments are being made on the waxing of cucumbers--peppers--and eggplants.

With all these new ideas--it's no wonder that we're eating more vegetables today. But a study made by the Federal Bureau of Home Economics shows that the use of even more vegetables (especially the green-colored and leafy vegetables) would help to improve American diets.

And now that the weather is warm--one of the best ways to use fresh vegetables is in salads. Raw vegetable combinations are always refreshing--and there's no danger of losing food values, when you use the vegetables uncooked.

Here are a few suggestions for very simple salads. Have you tried combining shredded cabbage with grated raw carrot--with thin slices of onion--or with chopped green pepper? And how about mixing grated raw rutabaga with chopped celery to make a delicious salad? Then there's that old favorite--the combination salad. It's simply slices of tomato and cucumber on lettuce...and then a garnish of onion--radishes--green pepper rings--or water cross.

But no matter what you put into the salad--the important thing is to serve it cold. A cold salad mixture on a chilled plate. And for best results--combine the vegetables with the dressing just before serving.

That's all the time I have today. But all through the summer, I'll be bringing you lots more news about many of the vegetables.

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